local calls and Service Providers are free to decide the pulse rate for different types of calls. Both Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited have not reduced the local call duration and have kept it as 180 seconds for local calls from landline to landline. However, taking into account the Interconnection Usage Charges (IUC), the pulse rate from landline to WLL (Mobile) has been kept as 90 seconds and Cellular mobile as 60 seconds.

Postal Facilities in Himachal Pradesh

†1713. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Gram Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh are devoid of post offices;

(b) if so, the number thereof; and

(c) by when Government plan to set up post offices in these Gram Panchayats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There are 626 Gram Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh without Post Offices.

(c) Post Offices are opened subject to fulfillment of distance, population and income norms and availability of resources and targets under Plan. Hence no time limit can be specified for setting up post offices in these panchayats.

Telephones in Gram Sabhas

1714. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Gram Sabhas in the country where telephones are functioning and the number of Gram Sabhas which have applied for the telephones, State-wise;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether any target has been fixed by the Department to connect all Gram Panchayats of the country with telephones; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) The Circle-wise details of Gram Sabhas provided with telephone facilities by BSNL are given in the Statement (*See below*).

(b) and (c) The remaining Gram Sabhas and villages under them shall be provided telephone facilities through Universal Service Obligation (USO) fund as a part of Rural telephone network programme.

Statement

Gram Sabhas provided with/without Telephone Facility

Sl. No.	Circle	Total No. of Panchayat Villages (with BSNL)	Panchayat Villages provided with telecom facility	Panchayat Villages Without telecom facility (with BSNL)
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andaman & Nicobar	67	67	0
2.	Andhra Pradesh	18264	18264	0
3.	Assam	2486	2095	391
4.	Bihar	8471	8471	0
5.	Chhattisgarh	7819	7819	0
6.	Gujarat	9462	9462	0
7.	Haryana	5922	5922	0
8.	Himachal Pradesh	3037	3019	18
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	1461	915	546
10.	Jharkhand	3471	3315	156

1	2	3	4	5
11.	Karnataka	5692	5692	0
12.	Kerala	1000	1000	0
13.	Madhya Pradesh	18820	18820	0
14.	Maharashtra	22917	22917	0
15.	North East-I	2020	1401	619
16.	North East-II	7020	2620	4400
17.	Orissa	5254	5121	133
18.	Punjab	11975	11975	0
19.	Rajasthan	8673	8673	0
20.	Tamilnadu	13126	13126	0
21.	Uttar Pradesh (East)	51262	51262	0
22.	Uttar Pradesh (West)	12858	12857	1
23.	Uttaranchal	6843	5929	914
24.	West Bengal	3473	3473	0
25.	Kolkata Telephones	437	437	0
26.	Delhi	191	191	0
	TOTAL	232021	224843	7178

Benefit to private operators under VPT System

1715. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that under village Public Telephone System, private operators were given undue benefit amounting to Rs. 719 crore;

(b) whether the Department spent more than Rs. 90 crore to provide VPTs on behalf of the private operators; and